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June 16, 2009

The Honorable Michael Copps  
Commissioner  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, SW  
Washington D.C. 20554

RE: Petitions for Declaratory Ruling Regarding Public, Educational  
and Governmental Access Channels, MB Docket No. 09-13, CSR-8126 (ACM *et al.*)

Dear Commissioner Copps:

I'm writing to urge a prompt action from the FCC on the Petition for Declaratory Ruling filed by the Alliance for Community Media and a coalition of community media groups on January 30, 2009. The petition concerns the treatment of local public, educational and governmental access (PEG) channels on the AT&T U-verse cable television system.

PEG access is required by law to be treated the same in quality, placement, and functionality as local broadcast channels on cable systems. Yet, as the Alliance for Community Media's petition describes, companies such as AT&T have degraded and reduced accessibility of PEG channels in many states around the country. Such practices are a fundamental threat to PEG access.

In a September 2008 hearing before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Financial Services, the FCC indicated that these practices violate federal law with respect to treatment of PEG channels. The State of Minnesota – and my District in particular – is blessed with many vibrant PEG access facilities and channels with active producers and volunteers. My constituents are concerned that if the companies named in these petitions are permitted to ignore the law, Minnesota's PEG channels will also eventually be moved or degraded. The result will be the loss of a valuable resource for our families and communities.

It is very important that federal law be upheld and enforced to preserve localism, diversity and free speech. I congratulate you for the timely opening of the FCC's comment period, and encourage a prompt ruling on this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Betty McCollum".

Betty McCollum  
Member of Congress

BM:bb